

Message Text

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C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (TEXT GARBLED)

E.O.11652:NA

TAGS: OVIP(KISSINGER)

SUBJECT: PRESS MATERIAL

1. HERewith FULL TEXT JAMES MCCARTNEY FRONT PAGE BYLINER,
SATURDAY, OCTOBER 26, PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER, HEADLINED
"DOCUMENTS BACK SAUDI ARMS DEAL."

2. DESPITE STATE DEPARTMENT DENIALS, SECRET DOCUMENTS
SIGNED BY TOP-LEVEL OFFICIALS TELL THE STORY OF A MULTI-
BILLION DOLLAR U.S. PROGRAM FOR THE TOTAL REBUILDING OF THE
ARMED FORCES OF SAUDI ARABIA.

3. THE PROGRAM WOULD INVOLVE THE MECHANIZATION OF THE
SAUDI ARMY INTO A MOBILE STRIKING FORCE WITH SOME 440 HELI-
COPTERS, NEW JET AIRCRAFT FOR THE AIR FORCE, INCLUDING
F-4 PHANTOMS, AND A MAJOR EXPANSION OF THE NAVY.

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4. THE PROPOSAL HAS NOT YET BEEN APPROVED, BUT IS OUT-LINED IN TWO DOCUMENTS LABELED "SECRET" THAT HAVE BEEN MADE AVAILABLE TO THE INQUIRER WASHINGTON BUREAU.

5. A CONGRESSIONAL EXPERT, SHOWN THE DETAILS, SAID IT WOULD REPRESENT A MAJOR ESCALATION IN U.S. ARMS SALES TO SAUDI ARABIA AND THAT "IT MEANS BILLIONS."

6. ONLY LAST WEEK, STATE DEPARTMENT OFFICIALS SAID THERE WAS "NO BASIS" FOR AN INQUIRER WASHINGTON BUREAU REPORT OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF A SECRET PLAN FOR A VAST INCREASE IN ARMS SALES TO THE SAUDIES.

7. BUT THE DOCUMENTS - ONE DATED SEPT. 13, 1974, THE OTHER SEPT. 16 - REFUTE THAT DENIAL, WHICH WAS LATER QUALIFIED, IN PART, BY STATE DEPARMTNET SPOKESMAN ROBERT ANDERSON.

8. THE SEPT. 16 DOCUMENT IS AN "ACTION MEMORANDUM" FROM ALFRED ATHERTON JR. AND GEORGE VEST, BOTH HIGH STATE DEPARTMENT OFFICIALS, TO JOSEPH SISCO, UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR POLITICAL AFFAIRS AND THE NUMBER THREE MAN IN THE DEPARTMENT.

9. ATHERTON IS ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR THE MIDDLE EAST; VEST IS HEAD OF THE BUREAU OF POLITICO-MILITARY AFFAIRS.

10. THE MEMO SAYS THAT SECRETARY OF STATE HENRY A. KISSINGER APPROVED LAST MARCH 8 THE IDEA OF A PENTAGON "SURVEY" OF SAUDI ARMED FORCES AND "MASTER PLANS FOR THEIR DEVELOPMENT" OVER THE NEXT FIVE OR 10 YEARS.

11. IT RECOMMENDS "THE DESIGN OF A BALANCED, MODERN FORCE STRUCTURE BY 1984 WHICH, IF PROPERLY TRAINED AND COMMENDED, SHOULD PROVIDE THE SAG (SAUDI ARABIAN GOVERNMENT) WITH THE CAPABILITIES TO (1) DETER AGGRESSION (2) DEFEAT AN ENEMY...(3) ASSIST IN MAINTAINING INTERNAL ORDER AND SECURITY (4) CONTRIBUTE TO THE SAG MODERATING ROLE IN THE MIDDLE EAST."

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12. IT THEN GOES ON TO RECOMMEND, SPECIFICALLY, FOR THE SAUDI ARMY:

12A. FOUR MECHANIZED BRIGADES, EACH WITH THREE MECHANIZED INFANTRY BATTALIONS.

12B. A TANK BATTALION, AND "OTHER COMBAT AND SERVICE SUPPORT ELEMENTS."

12C. ON AIRBORNE BRIGADE, WITH THREE AIRBORNE INFANTRY BATTALIONS, AND SUPPORT UNITS.

12D. AN AVIATION GROUP HEADQUARTERS WITH TWO ASSAULT HELICOPTER BATTALIONS.

12E. ON ATTACH HELICOPTER BATTALION.

12F. TWO AIR CALVARY BATTALIONS AND TWO ASSAULT SUPPORT HELICOPTER COMPANIES.

13. AFTER LISTING SEVERAL OTHER ITEMS, THE MEMO ADDS:

14. "A MAJOR ELEMENT IN ARRIVING AT THE ARMY FORCE LEVEL AND STRUCTURE WOULD BE ACQUISITION OF SUFFICIENT AIRCRAFT TO GIVE TH NECESSARY MOBILITY; THIS WOULD MEAN PURCHASE OF SOME 440 HELICOPTERS BETWEEN 1978 AND 1984."

15. IT ALSO ADDS THAT THE RESULT WOULD BE "A FIRST-RANK LAND COMBAT FORCE."

16. TOLD OF THE CONTENTS OF THE MEMO, A CONGRESSIONAL ARMS EXPERT SAID: "THIS, WITH ALL OF THE EQUIPMENT, WOULD GO INTO THE BILLIONS. IT IS WAY BEYOND THE MODEST \$300 MILLION ARMS MODERNIZATION PROGRAM WE HAVE BEEN INVOLVED IN WITH SAUDI ARABIA.

17. THE PROGRAM FOR THE SAUDI NAVY OUTLINED IN THE MEMO LISTS 26 NEW SHIPS, INCLUDING TORPEDO BOATS, PATROL BOATS, "MISSILE-EQUIPPED PATROL CHASERS," "PATROL GUNBOATS, MINESWEEPERS AND OTHERS.

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18. THE CONGRESSIONAL EXPERT DESCRIBED THIS AS "WAY BEYOND OUR PRESENT PROGRAM."

19. THE SEPT 16 MEMO DID NOT DISCUSS PLANS FOR THE SAUDI AIRFORCE, WHICH APPARENTLY WERE COVERED IN DETAIL IN AN EARLIER MEMO.

20. HOWEVER, A ROUGH IDEA OF WHAT HAS BN SUGGESTED FOR THE AIR FORCE WAS CONTAINED IN A CABLE, DATED SEPT. 13, WHICH WAS SENT BY SISCO TO THE U.S. EMBASSY IN SAUDI ARABIA.

21. IT REFERRED TO PLANS FOR EVENTUAL DELIVERY TO THE SAUDIS OF "ADVANCED MULTI-PURPOSE FIGHTERS."

22. A WELL-INFORMED OFFICIAL, WHO ASKED NOT TO BE IDENTIFIED, SAID THAT THE PLAN, AS HE RECALLED IT, INVOLVED SALE TO THE SAUDIS OF AT LEAST ONE SQUADRON OF F-4 PHANTOM JETS IN THE NEAR FUTURE.

23. PHANTOMS HAVE BECOME FAMED AS THE BACKBONE OF THE ISRAELI AIR FORCE, BUT NONE HAS EVER BEEN SOLD TO SAUDI ARABIA.

24. THE LONG-TERM PLAN, HE SAID, WAS TO REPLACE U.S.-BUILT F-5S AND F-5ES IN THE SAUGI INVENTORY WITH NEW YF-16 OR YF-17 FIGHTERS, ADVANCED PLANES STILL UNDER DEVELOPMENT IN THE UNITED STATES.

25. AT ONE POINT THE CABLE CONTAINS THE PHRASE THAT "DELIVERY OF THE FOLLOW-ON ADVANCED FIGHTER IS ANTICIPATED" IN 1980.

26. THE MEMORANDUM ALSO CONTAINED THIS PARAGRAPH:

27. "THE RELEASE OF THE REPORTS TO SAG (SAUDI ARABIAN GOVERNMENT) DOES NOT, OF ITSELF, CONSTITUTE U.S. GOVERNMENT ENDORSEMENT OF A POSSIBLE COMMITMENT TO SUPPLY SPECIFIC MILITARY SYSTEMS, OR EQUIPMENT OR PERSONNEL TO THE SAUDI ARABIAN ARMED FORCES."

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28. IN OTHER WORDS, NOT ALL OF THE EQUIPMENT THAT WOULD BE PURCHASED BY THE SAUDIS, IF THE PROPOSAL WERE APPROVED, WOULD NECESSARILY COME FROM THE UNITED STATES.

29. THE "ACTION MEMO" IS SIGNED BY SISCO, INDICATING HIS APPROVAL THAT THE CONTENTS OF THE MEMO BE SENT ON TO THE SAUDIS.

30. A JOINT SAUDI-U.S. COMMISSION IS TO MEET IN SAUDI ARABIA IN EARLY NOVEMBER TO CONSIDER THE PROPOSALS.

31. NEITHER OF THE SECRET DOCUMENTS MAKES ANY MENTION OF OIL.

32. THE PRIMARY OBJECTIVES OF U.S. POLICY IN SAUDI ARABIA, HOWEVER, ARE TO KEEP OPEN THE FLOW OF OIL SUPPLIES TO THE WEST AND TO TRY TO ELICIT SAUDI COOPERATION IN DRIVING DOWN THE PRICE OF OIL.

33. THE SAUDIS, WITH THEIR VAST OIL INCOME, WOULD HAVE NO PROBLEM PAYING FOR THE WEAPONS. THIS, IN TURN, WOULD HELP IMPROVE THE U.S. BALANCE OF PAYMENTS IN FOREIGN

TRADE, INSOFAR AS THE WEAPONS WERE PURCHASED FROM
THE UNITED STATES.

34. SUPPLYING THE SAUDIS WITH WHAT THEY WANT IN ARMS ALSO
WOULD STRENGTHEN THE MILITARY HAND OF A NATION THAT HAS
BEEN A MODERATING FORCE IN THE VOLATILE MIDEAST, AND COULD
MAKE THE SAUDIS MORE SENSITIVE TO U.S. INTERNAL
ENERGY PROBLEMS. (END TEXT) INGERSOLL

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